10 Coolest Tools for Student Blogging
By *Margareta Tripsa*

Audience/Level: young and adult learners of any level
Blogs, which are digital platforms that provide individuals with a medium for sharing knowledge and experiences, are becoming increasingly common in today's technologically-enabled schools. Weblogs or "blogs" are relatively new tools; they began their online existence about a decade and a half ago. Blogs, which represent instant publishing systems, have recently exploded onto the World Wide Web. The use of blogging tools allow students to reach a multitude of curriculum standards and all levels of instruction.

Ten cool ideas for blog posts:

1. **Embed talking avatars.** Voki is an effective language tool which enables users to express themselves on the web in their own voice using a talking character. Even a boring topic like idioms captures student attention when asked to create a Voki talking avatar about it. Blabberize is a great Web 2.0 tool that allows students to animate any picture by making it "talk" about whatever topic they might be working on.

2. **Create and interpret word clouds**. Create word clouds, which are graphical representations of word frequency, using tools like Wordle or Tagxedo. They provide students with a countless number of ways to interact with key vocabulary.

3. **Use Wallwisher.** Use Wallwisher to get your students express opinions, brainstorm topics, or to provide feedback to you.

4. **Create and publish e-books**. Help students become instant publishers and writers. Collaborative storytelling tools like StoryBird and StoryJumper help students become part of digital learning communities, which inspires them to develop their narrative talent.

5. **Embed student-created comic strips, or cartoons.** Try Chogger, Toondoo, or Strip Generator.

6. **Embed Digital Storytelling Projects.** These projects can be created using a variety of tools, such as Microsoft Photostory, ShowMe, VoiceThread, WeVideo, Videolicious, Educreation, and Vimeo.

7. **Publish podcasts**. Using PodOmatic, iPadio, or MyPodcast, create and post an audio broadcast over the web, which is broken up into episodes. It engages students because it is an authentic task that involves authentic audiences.

8. **Publish prezis.** Prezi, which is a cloud-based presentation, gives students the ability to express their creativity and showcase their knowledge and skills.

9. **Publish student created videos**. Publish videos using web tools such as Microsoft MovieMaker, digital cameras, or iOS devices such as iMovie.

10. Have students share their knowledge. Students can share their knowledge by creating products using the apps or digital tools of their choice. Teachers should focus primarily on the instructional standards to be met, not on specific apps or digital tools. Teachers should be flexible enough to give the students the freedom to use whatever means they want to showcase their knowledge and skills.

> See a [class blog](#) for examples of student work.

Having the students be not only consumers of content, but also producers of content, gives them the opportunity to manipulate the knowledge and internalize it. Blogging definitely fosters interactive learning and, as a result, students find themselves immersed in dynamic learning environments that help them expand their community of learners from the single setting of their classroom to the entire world. This factor brings a whole new dimension to the learning process.

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